

allowance for the spirit of the age. In her religion she was the fanatic, not the woman, and the devilish oppression and cruelty of the Inquisition throws a melancholy light on the moral and intellectual qualities which her panegyrists extol so highly. These qualities in a woman make the horror of her doings all the more inexplicable and revolting. To follow with such frightful devoutness in the wake of a savage monk through an ocean of blood and woe to the goal of uniformity of religious belief and national unity, is, from the moral and intellectual standpoint, a strange index of the virtues of meekness, benevolence, justice, &c., which Mr Prescott, following the older eulogists, admires so enthusiastically in his heroine. " Her heart, indeed," writes Mr Prescott, " was filled with benevolence to all mankind." It was certainly quite a peculiar kind of benevolence that could calmly consign to torture, fine, confiscation, tens of thousands of Jews and Moors because both race and religion caused them to refuse to become Christian hypocrites, liars before their God, false to their conscience and their past. It is really extraordinary that the historian, who fills page after page of complimentary print, did not pause to ask himself how such statements accord with the bloody records of a tribunal for which Isabella was personally responsible. The woman who offered up thousands of her subjects at the smoke-begrimed and fire-begirt altars of the horrible Deity whom she served should have lived in the age of the Druids. She would have been in her right place in an age of crass barbarism.

Spain, or at least the better part of Spain, showed its appreciation of the system of Isabella and Ferdinand by attempting to undo it when it was too late. Under King Charles I., the Holy Roman Emperor usually known as Charles V., it made a desperate attempt at reaction, an attempt instinct with noble aspirations, if not in all respects progressive, and doomed to failure by its own inherent weaknesses rather than by the strength of its adversary. This attempt is known as the Rising of the Comuneros, and, though the rising was inspired by the Flemish Charles' anti-national policy of governing his Spanish kingdom by his foreign favourites, it was at the same time, to judge from some of the demands of the insurgents, a reaction in favour of constitutional rights.